PREFACE

Like Olympic Games, THE Asian Games have elicited enormous fame among the countries of Asia. This sporting event has come to evoke tremendous keen and absorbing interest in the media and the general public, especially the sports enthusiasts, in the sports events held in each Asian Games. In the post-Second World War, Cold War rivalry between the United States and Soviet Union had emerged as the reigning order of the day at a time when newly independent countries of Asia, along with their counterparts in Africa and Latin America, were contemplating a niche of their in the international comity of nations. With a view to bring the countries of Asia on a single common platform, India hosted first Asian Relations Conference in early March 1947 at New Delhi, a few months prior to its attainment of independence in August 1947.

The first Asian Relations Conference was attended among others by countries like Indonesia, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Malaysia, and others. The declarations adopted at this Conference laid emphasis on increasing mutual cooperation among courtiers of Asia through exchange of cultural, economic, academic interaction. Sports were also construed as a means of fostering close relations among the countries of Asia.

India took the initiative of arranging sports events as early as possible and discussed the idea with other Asian countries. The prolonged negotiations resulted in the hosting of first Asian Games by India on the lines of Olympic Games in 1951 and it was decided to hold this event after an interval of every four years. With the passage of time, Asian Games became institutionalized and the number of participating countries which stood at 11 at the time of First Asiad had grown to about 44 countries by 2006 when the fifteenth Asian Games were held in Qatar. Thus the Asian Games have come to occupy a pre-
eminent position in the realm of international events and it is second only to Olympic Games in terms of popularity.

Asian Games have come to hog limelight in print as well as electronic media and topic of debate in literary and journalistic circles. The growing popularity of Asian games can be gauged from the plethora of literature that exists on different aspects of Asian Games in the form of books outlining its history, providing statistical data and analysis of different sports events, newspaper reports covering different Asian games held from time to time. However, there was a paucity of in-depth research on India’s performance in various Asian Games, particularly in the light of the fact that India has been one of the founding members of Asian Games and had the honour of hosting the First Asian Games at the outset of the 1950s. The present research work is a humble attempt to present the performance of Indian players in the Asian Games from 1974 to 2002. The entire study is divided into six chapters.

The first chapter is in the form of introduction that provides a brief historical background of evolution of Asian Games vis-à-vis India’s role in it. It further proceeds to review the representative works on Asian Games available in the form of books, reports and media reports etc., to ascertain as up to what extent the existing literature is helpful in discerning the role of Indian sportspersons in different Asian Games. after having reviewed the representative works, the analysis shows that many penetrating questions pertaining to India’s role in Asian Games have remained unanswered and the present study is an earnest endeavour in that direction. Objectives and the scope of the study along with hypotheses to be tested along with methodology adopted in the study are a incorporated in this chapter.
An overview of India’s sports policies till 2007 is provided in second chapter. This overview of India’s sports policies is analyzed under two subheads- A & B. Under subhead A, the development of India’s sports policies from 1947 to 1980 is analyzed while under subhead B, growth of sports in India from 1980 till 2007 is appraised. While examining the recommendations of various committees and commissions with regard to sports, the chapter also takes in account the deliberations in the Indian Parliament with regard to sports policy held from time to time. This appraisal of the proceedings of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha sheds light on the concern of the Members of Parliament (MPs) about the state of affairs pervading the realm of sports in India at that time. While taking a critical look at the Sports Enquiry Committee instituted in 1958, the analysis focuses on the concerns expressed by the MPs over the sordid state of affairs afflicting Indian sports.

The issues covered in this chapter, *inter alia*, include a brief overview of institution of Arjuna award for outstanding sportspersons by the Central Government, brief examination of the recommendations of Kothari Commission on Education (1964-66) with regard to sports in the country and concerns expressed by the MPs about the declining state of affairs in different sports during the decade of the 1970s. The development of sports policy between 1980 and 2007 is analyzed under subhead B in which recommendations of All India Sports Council are appraised. Momentous developments like establishment of a separate department of sports in 1982, coinciding with India hosting IX Asian Games that served as precursor to formulation of National Sports Policy in 1984, various aspects of the National Policy on Education 1986 with specific reference to sports. While dealing with National Sports Policy 2001, it finally takes a critical look at the National Sports Policy 2007 with a view to appraise its impact on the development and promotion of sports in the country.
Chapter three deals with performance of Indian players in international sports, particularly the Commonwealth Games and Olympic Games. While proceeding with its appraisal of the performance of India players in international sports, a brief analysis of linkages between sports, youth and nation-building by building up character of the youth through sports are also highlighted in this part of chapter. It also provides a brief background of the development of sports in India during the ancient, medieval and the British periods. While profiling development of sports in independent India, the chapter takes into account formation of various sports organizations like India Olympic Association, India Hockey Federation, Basketball federation of India and other related organizations that played pivotal role in the development and promotion of different sports in the country.

It also examines the powers and role of the Sports Authority of India in the field of sports. It is further observed from the analysis that, nonetheless, there has been a growing interest in India towards sports since independence but at the operational level, India's performance in intentional sports meets, particularly the Olympic games and Commonwealth Games does not commensurate with India's size, resources, population and its standing in the international arena.

An analysis of historical background of Asian Games is facilitated in the fourth chapter. It can be discerned some countries which were free made trials in this success and organized sports competitions under the banner of Far Eastern Championship beginning in 1913 and such endeavours continued until the latter half of the 1930s. India, after attaining independence in August 1947, made efforts in organizing Asian games and hosted the first Asian Games in March 1951. It also provides analysis of the second Asian Games held in the Philippines in 1954. In the third Asian Games hosted by Japan in 1958,
20 countries had sent 1422 competitors, while in the subsequent fourth, fifth as well as sixth Asian Games held in 1962, 1966 and 1970 respectively, the number of participating Asian countries varied between 17 and 18. The holding of Asian Games after an interregnum of four years had become almost an accepted phenomenon and participating countries were willing to host the next Games. The spirit of Asian Games was gaining momentum and it was a happy augury for the future of the Games.

The fifth chapter presents an analysis of Asian Games, from Seventh Asian Games held in 1974 to Fourteenth Asian Games held in 2002, with particular reference to the performance of Indian players in these games. It is observed that the performance of Indian players in various Asian Games; with the exception of two or three Asian Games, the performance of Indian players in general could not be said to be satisfactory. On the other hand, new entrants like China and some of the Central Asian Republics not only displayed excellent performance but continued to improve upon their performance after each event. India’s praiseworthy performance was in the 1951 Asian games while it was placed second by winning a total of 52 medals, of which 15 were gold medals, 16 silver medals and 21 bronze medals. In the subsequent Asian Games, India’s position ranked between seventh and tenth.

The final chapter is in the form of conclusion, which provides a summary of the study, testing of various hypotheses and makes suitable suggestions for the further improvement of Indian players in international sports, particularly in Asian Games, Commonwealth Games and Olympic Games.
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